

COMMENT CARD

BUTTE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN 2030

DATE OCT 8, 2008

Please fill out this card if you have any comments about the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance Update.
(Name and contact information is optional).

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COMMENTS (Use back if necessary):

Following comments refer to "Policy Alternatives" dated 9-22-08

ITEM 17 - WATER SUPPLY

(1) PROMOTE "RETROFIT" programs (i.e. SWAP OUT LEAKY OLD TOILETS FOR LOW FLOW)

(2) ENCOURAGE USE OF "GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE" (i.e. BIO-SWALES, PONDING ET...)

- INCORPORATE INTO SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS w/ PLANNING & ENGINEERING ^{DEPT'S.}

(3) ENCOURAGE PACKAGED WASTEWATER SYSTEMS WHICH PROMOTE GROUNDWATER RECHARGE

ITEM 18 - WATER QUALITY

(1) ENCOURAGE COMPREHENSIVE MIXED USE PLANNING & LARGE SCALE DESIGN EFFORTS

WHICH PROMOTE MANAGED STORM WATER RE-USE AND DISCHARGE

ITEM 19 - PACKAGED SEWAGE TREATMENT

(1) AVOID POLICIES WHICH DISCOURAGE ~~PREFERRED~~ NEW & EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

ITEM 21 - IMPROVING LOCAL ECONOMY

(1) ADOPT AGGRESSIVE ECONOMIC POLICY SIMILAR TO CITY OF CHICO ...

- UNDERLYING GOAL IS TO "FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH ENCOURAGES PRIVATE INVESTMENT"

(2) DESIGNATE LAND FOR RESEARCH & BUSINESS PARK SOUTH OF CHICO

ITEM 25 - BICYCLE ISSUES

(1) PROMOTE COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLANNING WHICH PROVIDES BIKE TRAILS

AND TRAILWAY CONNECTIVITY

OVER

Please place comment cards in the comment box located at the sign in table. Comments may also be e-mailed to DSGeneralPlan@buttecounty.net.

ITEM 34 - NATURAL RESOURCES & HABITAT

(1) PROMOTE LARGE SCALE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AS A MEANS TO CREATE RESOURCE PRESERVES.

- OBSERVATION..... public policy which discourages "development" also discourages the investment in planning which leads to appropriately designed open space PRESERVATION IS A PRODUCT OF WELL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT!

ITEM 36 - AB 32

(1) ENCOURAGE COMPREHENSIVE MIXED USE PLANNING WHICH ENCOURAGES WALKABILITY, BIKES, & ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION, TRANSIT FACILITIES & OTHER ~~MEASURES~~ MEASURES TO REDUCE RELIANCE ON CARS...

ITEM 39 - YOUTH SERVICES

(1) COUNTY COOPERATION OF WITH ~~RECREATION~~ RECREATION AGENCIES TO PROMOTE YOUTH SPORTS & RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Input to the Citizens Advisory Commission Meeting, October 9th, 2008
Catie and Jim Bishop, 1144 Mt. Ida Road, Oroville, CA

Regarding: Agriculture, and in particular our foothill agricultural lands

The 2030 General Plan guideline directs that agricultural lands “will be protected, maintained, promoted and enhanced.” That is an important priority and it should be fully applied to agriculture in the foothills east of Oroville.

Unfortunately, the foothill agricultural lands were overlooked initially in the development of Land-use Alternatives, and even now are not adequately depicted on working maps. There is active and potential agricultural land even beyond the officially recognized 880 acres of Unique Farmland, 65 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 1465 acres of Grazing Land (in Area 23).

Please consider the following points that highlight the value of foothill agriculture.

Foothill farmlands include long-established, very productive orchards, vineyards, and vegetable gardens, with historic farm buildings and many small commercial operations. They are unique in our region, with special microclimate and soils. On top of that, the area is served by a water system capable of delivering agricultural water supplies. There are also active and potential pastures that support grazing by a variety of livestock.

Small-scale agriculture (essentially “family scale” farming) is very viable, even on parcels of a few acres, and will become even more so over time. It is not just “hobby farming”. It produces good local food and meaningful incomes. Small-scale agriculture is an important part of a diverse mix of economic activities, and diverse economies are resilient. The agriculture not only produces food, but also encourages tourism and enhances community quality.

Rising energy and transportation costs will make local food production increasingly important over time. It makes much more sense to retain valuable agriculture close to town than to sacrifice irreplaceable productive lands to needless subdivision. Other areas now experiencing endemic pest problems have looked here in seeking lands free of those pests. You can always make a subdivision—you can never go back to farmland. A forward-looking Plan will maximize local food production, keep the dollars at home, and minimize transportation for both food and citizens.

The farmland represents a small fraction of the total area. To diminish that valuable farmland can add only a tiny %-age to the potential number of residences, and that is a bad trade. The right balance favors retention of the limited but very valuable area of agricultural lands.

All of the foothill agricultural lands should be protected and enhanced, with agriculture being the highest priority for their use, and not diminished and displaced by inappropriate development.

The particular points of parcel size and buffers may be different for foothill vs. valley farms, but the priority should be just as great for their protection.

Sincerely,

Catie Bishop, Jim Bishop

Goal: Protect groundwater supply for existing users.

Policy 1: Butte County shall map and model the different aquifer types and sizes in each area of the county and establish the "safe yield" for each.

There are two reasons for adding a policy of identifying and quantifying groundwater supplies in this General Plan; economic and social.

1) In 2007, orchards in Butte County (primarily almonds and walnuts) represented almost 60% of our total agricultural income (*1) Most of these orchards are totally dependent on groundwater, mostly from the Lower Tuscan Aquifer.

2) Almost 2/3's of Butte County citizens are dependent on groundwater. (*2) Most have little or no access to surface water that is not already claimed by holders with older water rights. Most of the domestic wells in the valley portion of the county are in the alluvial or shallow aquifers. Fractured rock aquifers are tapped in the foothill and mountain regions.

Policy 2: Applicants shall quantify the water requirements at build-out of any new development and identify the water source to meet those requirements. No development shall be allowed that will exceed the water supply, taking into account the water needs of the existing users and approved projects in each area of the county and the safe yield of that specific aquifer.

Measure G, passed by the voters in 1996 requires the Butte Basin Water Users to report annually "the amount of groundwater pumping that can occur during the water year within each county sub basin without exceeding the safe yield of each sub basin". (*3)

However, in 1996 little was understood about the three different types of aquifers that supply Butte County citizens: 'fractured rock aquifers' in the foothills and mountains, 'shallow or alluvial aquifers' that serve most of the domestic wells in the valley and the 'Lower Tuscan or deep, confined aquifer system' that serves most of the agricultural wells.

These different types of aquifers recharge differently, both in location of recharge and rates, and respond differently to pumping regimes. These areas must be mapped to protect existing citizens and to prevent inadvertent overdraft and stranding of existing wells.

One area of fractured rock aquifer in Placer County was studied and it was determined that there might be enough water to supply 24 more homes, but the county had just permitted a 175 unit subdivision.

(*1) Butte County Agricultural Crop Report, 2007 Total Agricultural Sales; \$507,253,000; Fruit and Nut Crop Value; \$298,284,000 or 58.8%; Field Crop Value; \$144,741,000 or 28.5%

(*2) Population and Drinking Water Sources from "Settings and Trends" Tables 3-3 & 12-9--- Total county population; 217,209, surface water; 78,413, Water District membership from LAFCO Municipal Services Review; 2,239, Other (groundwater dependent); 136,557

(*3) Butte County Code Chapter 33-2 (b) Definitions and Chapter 33-3(b) Groundwater planning process.

by T. St. Amant
not LWV

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Water Resources

17. How should the General Plan protect and enhance Butte County's water supply?

- everything
govt does
requires \$
don't use as
an excuse*
- a. ~~Seek funding for and~~ Conduct comprehensive, county-wide mapping of groundwater resources.
 - b. ~~Seek funding for and~~ Conduct comprehensive mapping of groundwater recharge areas.
 - c. ~~Seek funding for and~~ Conduct scientific analysis of the costs and water supply impacts of groundwater pumping.

❖ DELETE "SEEK FUNDING FOR."

❖ "SEEK FUNDING" IS A COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE.

❖ EVERYTHING GOVERNMENT DOES NEEDS FUNDING, BUT WHEN "SEEK FUNDING" IS A PRIMARY CONDITION, THE LACK OF EASY FUNDING OFTEN BECOMES AN EXCUSE TO NOT COMPLETE THE TASK.

❖ LET THE SYSTEM PRIORITIZE THE TASKS THROUGH THE NORMAL BUDGET PROCESS. *eg complete in budget process*

- d. Protect groundwater recharge through the establishment of Recharge Zones in which development and ~~constructed impermeable surfaces~~ will be limited and historical groundwater recharge levels will be monitored ensured.

❖ SIMPLIFY THE STATEMENT AND REQUIRE CONTINUATION OF HISTORICAL RECHARGE LEVELS.

- e. Continue to participate in the Four-County Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Colusa, Glenn and Tehama Counties, and cooperate with other adjacent counties and water districts to plan for and manage groundwater resources.

- f. Allow new development only when it can be ~~shown~~ projected that adequate water services will exist to serve it into the future without adversely impacting current users.

❖ NEED TO PROTECT CURRENT RESIDENTS AND THE FUTURE.

- g. ~~Require metering of non-domestic wells to allow the County to fund aquifer recharge programs.~~

❖ SOUNDS LIKE TAXATION OF AGRICULTURAL WELLS.

- h. Provide stricter regulations to limit paving and increases in impermeable surfaces that reduce groundwater recharge, or require permeable surfaces to be installed for new development.

- i. ~~Provide stricter limits on criteria for the exports of agricultural Butte County water within the guidelines of the voter-established Chapter 33 of the Development Code, which restricts County water exports.~~

- i. Strengthen the ordinance that governs groundwater transfer (Chapter 33) to require an independent analysis of potential third party impact, require full mitigation for third party impact, and require approval by the Board of Supervisors rather than the Water Commission.

❖ CURRENT WORDING IS AMBIGUOUS, THEREFORE, WEAK.

*-not
by
person
who wants
to sell
the water*

- ❖ CURRENTLY, THE PARTY WANTING TO SELL WATER GETS TO ASSESS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HIS NEIGHBORS!
- ❖ CURRENTLY, THE UNELECTED WATER COMMISSION DECIDES ON TRANSFERING WATER OUT OF THE COUNTY. THIS IS TOO IMPORTANT NOT TO BE DEALT WITH BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.

j. ~~Oppose the sale of water from within the county or from aquifers that serve the County to users outside of the region.~~

- ❖ IN CONFLICT WITH WATER TRANSFER ORDINANCE.
- ❖ "OPPOSE" REALLY SAYS NOTHING SUBSTANTIAL.

k. Increase water conservation through incentives and regulations concerning aspects such as use of water efficient fixtures and landscaping, as well as educational programs.

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- l. Use the County's State Water Project allocation in the highest and best manner.
- m. Continue to utilize the Butte County Water Commission and the Department of Water and Resource Conservation as an important part of the water resource planning process.
- n. Support efforts to transport Feather River water from Lake Oroville to the Paradise and Chico areas.
- o. Establish a program to capture runoff water and promote groundwater recharge.
- p. Other: Within the Basin Management Objective process governed by Chapter 33A establish provisions for mandatory corrective or mitigation measures when groundwater levels decrease to an dangerous threshold.

- ❖ CURRENT BMO PROCESS IS BASED ON VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE ONLY.
- ❖ NO PROVISION FOR MANDATORY COMPLIANCE SHOULD VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE FAIL.
- ❖ GROUNDWATER LEVELS ARE TOO IMPORTANT TO TOO MANY PEOPLE TO BE LEFT TO VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE.

*Tony:
not def.
BMO len
cd be good
starting
point*

*Bruce - what wd be measured against? now already @ dangerous levels compared to 1950s
Tony - CAC doesn't have to set threshold - just wants to ~~set~~ have process w/ all ppl @ the table*